

# Health Promotion Resource Guide

## Core Program Components: Weight Management



Although Weight Management Programs (WMP) will vary by installation according to target population and available resources, several **core components** should always be included. The National Institutes of Health Practical Guide to the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults ([http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/prctgd\\_c.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/prctgd_c.pdf)) recommends:

### #1: Dietary therapy

- The goal is **slow** but **progressive** weight loss.
- Education should focus on:
  - **Energy values** of different foods
  - Food **composition**
  - Evaluation of nutrition **labels**
  - New habits for food **purchasing**
  - Food **preparation**
  - **Strategies** to avoid high calorie foods
  - Adequate **water** intake
  - Reduced **portion** sizes
  - Limiting or eliminating **alcohol**

HELPFUL HINT: Consider individual food preferences. Encourage program participants to try new things, but make sure their eating plans include foods they already eat.

### #2: Physical Activity

- **Avoiding injury** is the highest priority.
- Find reasonable ways to **increase daily activity**.
- Physical activity must be **enjoyable** and **fit** into daily life.
- **Walking** is attractive for individuals who have been very sedentary.
- Participants should **schedule** physical activity and then **budget** time to actually do it.
- Use of an exercise **log** or **diary** is helpful.

### #3: Behavior therapy

- Participants must actively **set goals** for behavior change.
- Goals should be specific, attainable, and **forgiving** (less than perfect).
- A series of **small**, short-term **goals** can be more effective than one large, overwhelming goal.
- Use a **problem-solving** approach for goals that are not fully met.
- Effective behavior modification techniques include:
  - **Self-monitoring** (food diary, exercise log, regular weight checks)
  - **Rewards** (should be desirable, timely, and contingent on meeting a goal)
  - **Stimulus control** (learn what social or environmental cues trigger overeating - modify those cues)

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### Bottom line

The use of these three core components can help maximize the impact of a WMP.